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First Nations and the Europeans —race-based relations

by Brian Beaver

Terra Nullius—lands that do not belong to anybody. The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples said it best. *Terra Nullius*—the doctrine used by the British and other European powers, to justify the aggressive taking of land from the First Nations during the colonial period. European powers simply decided that the original inhabitants, as a race, were inferior and their ancestral occupation and ownership of the land irrelevant.

Offensive as this sounds, perhaps the First Nations should be a little grateful that it was the British and—not the Spanish, who ended up with control of Canadian territory, since the Spanish were not particular about legalities. They took the land outright, usually violently and those who did not immediately convert to their religion were brutally quashed and, of course, their lands taken.

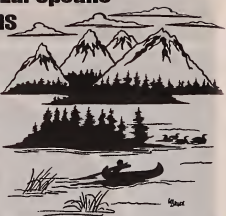
Fast forward to December 1998 when the Prime Minister—defending the Nisga'a land claim agreement, said "It is an obligation that has been given to the governments in Canada and in British Columbia by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, that the settlers should make a treaty with the Natives when they arrive there," and "It is not a question of polls. It is a question of law."

So, it is baffling that it has taken the wealthy governments several hundred years to make a move to pay for this land. This is even more surprising given that the Prime Minister in 1998 says the obligation is law.

It serves to no useful purpose to state again that we have been treated as second class citizens and this treatment has been a national disgrace. This has been known for a long time. When considering this reality, one has to consider how the concept of race has forged Canada's relations with First Nations.

The notion of race was based on the prevalent view that genetic groups had distinctive physical characteristics, which made for a hierarchy of groups. Along with this came the concept of racial inequalities—inferiority and superiority. A convenient way to justify the evils of colonialism.

The concept that Indian people were not equal to the western Europeans continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, when the British entered into treaties with the First Nations. Chiefly to preserve British authority and advantage over other European nations vying for a piece of the New World, they signed treaties on a Nation to Nation basis. This was followed by the creation of the Indian Act which, under the guise of protection of Indian



peoples served as a means to control and exercise complete authority over Indian peoples, since it regulated every aspect of Indian life, from cradle to grave.

Equally important and just as devastating has been the ongoing race-based destruction of Indian culture and language through forced assimilation into white society. That is, residential schools, the removal of Indian political institutions and social systems (for example, the imposition on Indian society of elected leaders, and the taking away of the traditional hereditary system), and loss of religion, and so on. All had devastating effects.

The Royal Commission report, outlining how "ethnocentric notions gained currency and were given legitimacy by certain court decisions", quotes a section of the Ontario court case, *St. Catherine's Milling and Lumber Co. v. The Queen*: "To maintain their position the appellants must assume that the Indians have a regular form of government, whereas nothing is more clear than they have no government and no organization, and cannot be regarded as a nation capable of holding lands... The Indians had no rules or regulations which could be considered laws."

Again, it does not have to be said that we Indians, because of race-based actions, were too often denied the dignity and self-respect associated with making our own decisions and learning from the mistakes.

The Royal Commission report called for a new beginning based on the premise that any efforts to redress the past must include the right of Indian people to determine their own destiny. The report, released in 1996, was welcomed with an onslaught of criticisms that were usually race-based. Citizenship, individual rights versus universal rights, equality,

Continued opposite.

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Auditor general: government needs to improve funding arrangements

In his report tabled recently in the House of Commons, the Auditor General of Canada says that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada needs to better match funding arrangements with the willingness and ability of First Nations to assume responsibility for the funds they receive. "Progress has been unacceptably slow," said Denis Desautels.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provides \$3.6 billion each year to more than 600 First Nations to administer programs such as social assistance, education, housing, roads, electrification and water systems.

"It is crucial that First Nations who receive these funds be willing and able to manage them successfully," said Denis Desautels. "It is the department's responsibility to ensure that the funding arrangements it uses are well suited to the circumstances. I am concerned that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has not taken adequate steps to address this challenge."

This report follows up on a 1996 audit that noted that almost one third of First Nations and tribal councils were in financial difficulty. New funding arrangements were subsequently introduced to address the problem. While some improvements have been noted, the report concludes that more rigorous attention is needed.

In addition, the report observes that the department needs assurance that fair and open mechanisms for addressing allegations of wrongdoing are operating effectively. The department should have better guidelines for managing allegations; it also needs a national reporting system on the frequency and nature of allegations received and on their disposition.

"As well, if improvements to funding arrangements are not made," said the Auditor General, "the ability of some First Nations to strengthen their capacity to become more self-reliant will be hindered."

Relations, continued from page 2

democracy, justice and other lofty ideals that have been the luxury of an economically comfortable, mainstream society were being used to justify denial of historical and legal rights of Indian people.

These arguments are insidious. We see them being dredged up and used again and again. A recent example is the Nisga'a agreement. Critics jumped on the agreement like a pack of wolves snapping at their cornered prey. They think it fashionable to slam the agreement and are using race, individual rights versus universal rights, and so on, to state their case. Evidence suggests that these arguments will continue to be used to deny First Nations what is their own. To go further, no matter how sacred these rights are, in the critics' own minds, forcing these upon Indian people would simply be another imposition like the Indian Act, residential schools, or the reserve system.

Critics might well do better to take an honest look at the agreement.

Brian Beaver is a Mississauga, Ojibwa (Anishinabek) from the Alderville First Nation in Southern Ontario.



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Poundmaker's Lodge staff allege financial mismanagement

by John Copley

The world-renowned Poundmaker's Lodge has had 25 years of continued success in its treatment of troubled Native people, many of whom have recovered after years of serious drug and alcohol addictions. But today the organization is facing some troubles of its own, namely a recent fire on the premises and an announcement in media that the famous treatment centre is suffering from financial irregularities.

A call has gone out from some of the senior managers and staff for the resignation of Executive Director, Bard Budesheim, as well as the organization's current board of directors.

Eric Shirt, one of the founding members of the organization, in fact, the man who put together the original proposal for the lodge, is heading the protest. He and others have filed a notice of motion with the Supreme Court to try and take over the control of the institution. A series of affidavits filed by numerous individuals, including the Lodge's bookkeeper, accuse Budesheim and the board of financial mismanagement. They say substantial amounts of money have been paid out to people for work that was never done. They also say the current leadership has abused their authority by rewarding family and friends with well paid appointments.

Alberta Liberal Colleen Soetaert, brought the matter before the Alberta Legislature on March 22. In an excerpt taken from Alberta Hansard, Soetaert said that "the staff from the Poundmaker's Lodge in St. Albert have repeatedly asked over the last 10 days to meet with their board to discuss staff grievances and allegations over the mismanagement of funds. They've been refused a meeting. Given that this organization receives funding from the government, and these are very serious allegations, will the minister commit to investigating the situation and commission a forensic audit?"

Minister of Community Development Shirley McClellan replied. "We contract with Poundmaker to deliver services, in fact, I think our contract is over \$900,000 a year. Poundmaker Lodge has certainly provided some excellent treatment programs over the years. The issues between the board and the staff are clearly issues that need to be resolved at that level. The CEO of AADAC has met with the groups who are involved in this (protest) and are working to facilitate it. I know that there is a tremendous commitment on both sides, and I think with that commitment to the program and to the services that they deliver, if they can get together in a meeting, I'm sure that they can resolve these issues."

She added that "before I would ask for a forensic audit I would want to have some basis for doing so. But let me just inform the honourable member that in 1997 AADAC and Justice, who also has some programs delivered through Poundmaker, had a program review completed. In 1998 an external company did a management and financial review. That review raised some recommendations. Those were presented to the board, and it is my understanding the board accepted those recommendations and is in the process of implementation of those now. As far as the audit, Mr. Speaker, there will be an audit as there is done each year, and I can tell the honourable member that there will be a financial audit done at the year-end, and that it will be done by an independent auditor."

Poundmaker's Lodge operates on an annual budget that nears \$4 million, most of which comes from a variety of government departments and agencies.



First Nation protests meaningless agreement

Chief Sam Kashkeesh has given an ultimatum to the Buchanan Group, owners of the Long Lake Forest Products company: either sign the negotiated agreement it has with the Aroland First Nation or face action that will prevent access to the Nakina Forest Management Area in the Thunder Bay area.

"We must now use more forceful means to make the company live up to its agreement and work with us in developing the forestry industry in and around our community. We have put a lot of time and effort in securing a working partnership only to see the company use us to secure a license from the Ontario government then renege on its word," stated Chief Kashkeesh.

The forest company was obliged, under the terms of the license approval process, to include the First Nations in the development and management of the forest in the licensed area. In order to secure the license, the company negotiated an agreement with the First Nation. It dealt with issues such as co-

management of the forest, transfer of expertise to First Nations people to allow them to improve in all aspects of forestry and business management, consultation with the community and trappers who earn their living from these forests, and other related economic development opportunities for the nation. In all, the agreement dealt with twelve specific points that would have provided beneficial returns to both the community and the company.

"This was truly a win-win situation for all the parties involved. The entire community would have benefited from the economic activities of the mill, learned new skills and become self-sufficient. The company would have benefited from a pool of labour, eager to work, located a stones-throw from the plant, and could have shared in our knowledge of the land and its resources. However, today I feel that we were never in their plans except as pawns to be used to secure the license," added the chief.

The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations agrees with the position of the nation. "I find it extremely disgraceful that, in an era where governments, First Nations and businesses talk of working together in partnership, such a cynical move by a

Continued on page 30

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newsbriefs

Elijah Harper on a cross country speaking tour

Native politician, Elijah Harper, gained national attention in 1990 as the only member of the Manitoba legislature to vote against the Meech Lake Accord, a move that eventually helped quash the deal. His "No" vote was rendered because of the Accord's failure to address Native rights, something that Mr. Harper continues to seek today. As a former Indian residential school student, Harper remembers the bad times and says the wounds will take a long time to heal. During a recent trip to Edmonton, Harper spoke to a gathering at Edmonton's Richfield Christian Fellowship Church. Speaking about the great divide that still exists between Aboriginals and other Canadians, Harper said that though the wounds would eventually heal "it's not going to happen overnight. It might not even happen in my generation."

Though Harper still addresses the same issues he's now on a mission to help end the poverty, health care problems and inadequate education that often faces Canada's Native people. He told the gathering that the current move to settle land claims will go a long way to achieving his goal of attaining Aboriginal equality.

Mr. Harper is currently travelling across Canada and says he's quite pleased with the support he has received in the various communities he has visited.

Tsui T'ina Elder perishes in fire

Tragedy has once again struck central Alberta's Tsui T'ina's First Nation. A highly regarded Tsui T'ina Elder and the great-great grandson of one of Canada's most famous chiefs perished recently in a fire that swept through their home. Catherine Big Plume, 73 and her young grandson, Joseph Big Plume, 6, died of smoke inhalation from a fire that is believed to have started on the kitchen stove.

Lynne Big Plume, whose son and mother perished in the blaze, told media that the fire was so intense "there was no way that they could escape through the front door or through the downstairs."

The Tsui T'ina Elder, who'd spent her entire life on the Tsui T'ina Reserve, will be missed by everyone. Known as a generous giving person, Catherine Big Plume, even in her aging years, had been an active and highly respected member of her community. Young Joseph was the great-great grandson of Chief Joseph Big Plume, one of Alberta's most powerful chiefs during the late 1800s.

Coroner's inquest underway in Yukon

A coroner's inquest into the shooting death of Harley Timmers, a 23 year old Native from Whitehorse, Yukon is currently underway in this snow covered capital.

Mr. Timmers, who was shot three times by an RCMP officer on September 8 last year, died in a Vancouver hospital the following day. Police say the officer who shot Timmers had little choice, he'd been in a choke hold just before firing a bullet point blank at the suspect's head. The coroner's inquest into the RCMP shooting fatality is a matter of law in the Yukon where death under this type of violent circumstance requires that an inquest be held.

Hending the fatality inquest is Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, the first Aboriginal woman ever appointed to the Saskatchewan bench. Kent Stewart, the



Yukon's chief territorial coroner, called Judge Turpel-Lafond a respected member of the bench capable of delivering a fair judgment.

Immediately following the shooting, the Assembly of First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations commissioned an independent review of the police investigation into the matter.

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Avalanche inquiry underway in northern Quebec

by John Copley

In the early hours of New Year's Day 1999 tragedy struck the small northern Quebec community of Kangisualjuq when an avalanche came crashing down from a nearby mountainside. The heavy snow crushed several homes and the community school, leaving nine people dead and dozens more injured. In the three months since the horrific event took place the 600-plus citizens have had to get on with their lives, remembering but not reliving the experiences of that day.

"In the north," said village resident, 32 year old Sam Etok, in an interview with Canadian Press, "you have to be self-sufficient. If you don't go to work, who is going to replace you? The Elders tell us that bad things happen in life and that we just have to accept them."

But simply accepting the matter will not do—that's why as this paper goes to press, a coroner's inquest, which began on April 12, continues—as it will for the next three weeks or more. The inquest, which is taking place inside Kangisualjuq's aluminium-sided church, is being held to try and determine why the accident happened and why previous warnings about the possibility of such an incident went unheeded. The avalanche took the lives of four adults and five children.

The first person to take the stand to relate her experiences during the tragic event was Kangisualjuq mayor, Maggie Emudluk. She told those attending the inquest that though she couldn't recall everything she did that day, friends told her that she helped to dig them out of the mounds of snow and pull them to safety after the avalanche struck. She told the inquest that there had already been a couple of heavy snowfalls in the same area as the one that slid into the community, but that she didn't think they were unsafe at the time. As a child, Maggie Emudluk slid down the hill on her toboggan, just as every kid who ever lived in the community did. "Ever since I was growing up," she said, "I never perceived it a dangerous mountain."

Three hundred people were gathered together to celebrate the countdown to 1999 when the avalanche swooped down the side of a 400 metre (1315 feet) high

incline and crashed into the side of the Kangisualjuq community's, Satsuamvik School gymnasium.

At the school, principal John Leduc says there was no time to escape. The avalanche, he said, only "took half a second" to wreak its havoc.

Though this isn't the first time an avalanche has occurred at the school site, it is the first time that the result brought serious injury and death. A team of avalanche experts arrived to study a previous Quebec government analysis of the area and the situation immediately after the avalanche struck. Their testimony is expected later this month. It is expected that the first witnesses to speak will be Elders, survivors and relatives of the deceased.

School and town officials and citizens have said that since experiencing their first (dangerous) avalanche in 1994, they have expressed their concerns about the location of the school and what they could do to prevent another slide. As a result of the apparent awareness of potential danger, several law suits are currently being considered by some of the bereaved families.

When Transport Canada's engineers first arrived in Kangisualjuq they had the community evacu-

ate 10 buildings near the avalanche-prone area. Since that time several houses have been pulled to different locations and the school gymnasium has been converted into a temporary warehouse.

The coroner's inquest is not in a position to lay blame or find fault. The inquests' job is to investigate the deaths and the circumstances under which they occurred. The inquest can, however, make recommendations on how these types of incidents can be prevented in future.



CHRISTOPHER MONTGOMERY FOR THE GAZETTE

Traditional home site moving toward self-sufficiency

by Malcolm McColl

Clark Robinson is the recreation director for the 400 member community of Klemtu. He faces an interesting and difficult challenge. They live on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean. The village of Klemtu, British Columbia is a traditional home site for clans of the Kitsoo. For the past 80 years it has been inhabited by Kitsoo, Tsimshian and Heiltsuk fishing families.

"It's remote," said Robinson, 36, team manager for the Klemtu boys basketball team. Robinson brought the boys on a journey down the coast during the March break in school. The team played two games in the provincial finals for First Nations basketball in Port Alberni. Klemtu won the first game, lost the second.

Robinson said, "They're a young team. They are all fourteen playing against 16 year olds. I brought them down this year for the experience. They will be back next year."

Robinson said the boys had reason to be satisfied to steam back to the wild north west coast after winning one game. Up in Klemtu the BC Ferry Corp. steams into harbour once every eight to fourteen days. The traffic increases in the tourist season.

Although the village occupies a traditional site, the trappings of industry have been in Klemtu for most of the century, said Robinson. "We have the world's longest boardwalk," he explained, but added, "It'll be gone soon. They are tearing it down to widen the road." He said it's a single lane road round the bay (along with a few more kilometres) on Sewind Island. "The road is so narrow you have to stand sideways when a car comes along." They have a handful of cars and minivans on the island.

"Up until 30 years ago nobody had running water. It took the personal initiative of one man to bring our village into the mainstream of modern life." Percy Starr, Kitsoo Elder, won the Order of Canada for his accomplishments. Starr managed

Continued on page 16

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letter to the editor

Dear Editor:
I am writing to express my feelings about the shooting of Connie and Ty Jacobs. I know a lot of Aboriginal women out there can relate to the social services system and can pour their hearts out to the Jacobs family.
I for myself am sad but also angry at the welfare system that doesn't always work for Aboriginal women. We are a proud First Nations and we all do not give up our children so easily.
If you look at our Aboriginal history it's no wonder we won't back down. We were conditioned to fight back to the man-made system that our Creator didn't make.
Some of the Aboriginal women of this country put up with third world living conditions, and many of them are single parents. We can't say that this sort of "incident" won't happen again.
Stay strong, and take care.

Rhonda F. Buffalo
Hobbema, Samson Cree Nation

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of a day-long party that embraced celebration, traditional Inuit dancing, speeches and prayer. The party, which took place in Iqaluit, welcomed the new 2.2 million square kilometre Nunavut Territory as Canada's 11th province.

A host of dignitaries and well wishers were among the 1,500 or so people who made their way to Iqaluit to witness the historic moment. The Inuit of the Northwest Territories (NE Sector) now have the autonomy to manage their own affairs and determine their own direction, albeit within the jurisdictional boundaries of Canada.

Included on the list of dignitaries attending the inaugural ceremony were Nunavut Premier, Paul Okalik, Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Governor-General Romeo LeBlanc and Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart.

Numerous speeches were presented during the inaugural ceremonies, all of which were positive, praising and full of hope.

"As the world watches, we must demonstrate how our society can deal with our problems," said Premier Paul Okalik. "I pledge to you, the people of Nunavut, that the government of Nunavut will work to ensure there are the right conditions to assist you in making the change."

Governor-General LeBlanc told the crowd that if the Inuit's ability to survive was any indication of their ability, the future was assured.

"You are the closest people on earth to the North Star," he said. "Tonight, when Canadians look up to the North Star we will remember your long history of courage, compassion and endurance. Through courage, sharing and ingenuity, the Inuit have prevailed in the harshest land on earth."

Prime Minister Chretien, speaking at a legislature ceremony, said he was awed by the amount of work that lay ahead.

"As Nunavut takes flight," he commented, "you are dealing with immense challenges. Whether it is educating your fast growing population, alleviating poverty and social breakdown or building the capacity within your own government to address these challenges, you have your work cut out for you."

Minister Jane Stewart says she was very pleased and excited, both as a minister and as a private citizen at the accomplishments being made by the Inuit in Canada's north. "I can't tell you how much pride it gives me," she said. "We can reconcile Aboriginal rights in a modern Canada; our federation is flexible and can accommodate the wishes of its people."

Nunavut's funding over the next 14 years will come primarily from transfer payments from the federal government. During the first year (1999) alone, more than \$800 million will be transferred to the Nunavut capital of Iqaluit, formerly, Frobisher Bay. In all, more than \$1.1 billion will be spent during the next decade and a half, not including the \$150 million required to offset initial setup/startup costs.

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8 Nunavut... did you know?

(NC)—Most Canadians are passionate about winter—they either love it or hate it. If you're a skier, chances are you listen to the radio for snow conditions to find out what kind of skiing to expect. If not, you probably listen in dread for news on how much snow you can look forward to shoveling. For people in Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, accurate snow forecasting can mean the difference between life and death.

In English, there are few words for snow—it's either heavy, light, wet or granular. Did you know that in Inuktitut, the Inuit language spoken by 85 percent of the Nunavut population, there are at least 14 words for snow? Here they are:

- aniugaviniq - very hard, compressed and frozen snow
- apijaq - snow covered by bad weather
- apijaniagaut - the first snowfall of autumn
- katakartanaq - snow with a hard crust that gives way under footsteps
- kavisillaq - snow roughened by rain or frost
- kinirfaq - compact, damp snow
- mannguv - melting, snow

masak - wet, falling snow
matsaaq - half-melted snow
natiruvaaq - drifting snow

What is an Inuksuk?

(NC)—An inuksuk (singular) means "likeness of a person" in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. A well-known symbol in northern Canada, the inuksuk is made of rock slabs sculpted to resemble a human with outstretched arms or legs. The more traditional inuksuit (plural) are simply piles of well mapped-out rocks.

These markers—or signposts—help guide Inuit across the treeless tundra of the Canadian Arctic. They also help to channel caribou into areas where Inuit can easily harvest them. The open leg on an inuksuk near water or a coastline indicates an open channel for navigation. In the middle of land, an open leg points towards the valley as a route to pass through the mountains.

The extended arm of an inuksuk points at the direction travellers should be facing on their northern journey. The distance of an inuksuk from the shoreline is determined by approximately how far off shore fish will be found in great numbers. Stone markers, sometimes adorned with the antlers of caribou, will alert travellers to the presence of food along the paths.

pukak - crystalline snow that breaks down and separates like salt
qannialaq - light-falling snow
qiasuagq - snow that has thawed and refrozen with an ice surface
qigumaag - snow whose surface has frozen after a light spring thaw



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Nunavut: Canada's newest territory

(NC)—Here's how Canada's three territories compare:

	Nunavut (Est. April 1/99)	Northwest Territories	Yukon
Area	1,994,000 sq km	1,229,070 sq km	483,450 sq km
Population	27,219	40,309 (July '97)	31,632 (July '97)
Legislative Assembly	19 members	14 members	17 members
Gov't spending estimates	\$587 million	\$ 690 million	\$281 million

For more facts on how Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, affects the North, visit www.inac.gc.ca on the Internet, write to: Publications and Public Enquiries at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H4, or call (819) 997-0380.—News Canada

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Saluting Native Graduates

Royal Bank Education Awards offer invaluable support

by John Copley

When the Royal Bank of Canada introduced its Native Student Awards Program back in 1992, it was through a desire to help Aboriginal students from across Canada achieve their aspirations of attaining a post-secondary education. It was also an opportunity for the nation's leading financial institution to strengthen its relationship with the country's Native community. Since that time there have been more than 35 educational awards handed out to an impressive array of exceptional students, many of whom have gone on to reap the benefits that often come with a good education. Many of these award winners have utilized their knowledge to gain better job opportunities. Some have been employed by the Royal Bank - including 1994 Native Student Award winner, Rhonda Beauvais.

"Winning the award was a dream come true," remarked the 27 year old former Canadore College and Nipissing University student during a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "When I was named one of the five winners from across Canada, it nearly floored me. It was one of the most exciting moments in my life."

Just as she was completing her second year at North Bay, Ontario's, Canadore College, Rhonda was advised by one of her professors, Michael Brophy, that she should send in an application and compete for one of the five awards that the Royal Bank was offering via its Native Students Awards Program. She said her former teacher, "who was always there when I needed him, played a major role in any success I've achieved" to date.

"Everybody needs a little support and a pat on the back once in a while," said Beauvais. "I thank both Michael Brophy and my Aunt Brenda for doing just that for me. Their unwavering support made all the difference. After I received the award the onus was on me to produce. I did—and I'm thankful that I did. The last four and half years have been a tremendous learning experience for me. I've come to realize that no person should ever sell themselves short and that every person who has a will to succeed, can. I'm a real life example. I can tell you now that there was a moment or two in my life when I never would have dared to dream or to have high aspirations for myself. But I found out, mostly through my Aunt Brenda, that determination and a good, positive attitude can help you achieve all of your dreams."

Rhonda's Aunt Brenda raised three children and overcame a bout with cancer and still managed to get her Bachelor of Native Studies degree. She's also completed three of the four years required to complete her masters degree in Native Human Services.

Rhonda Beauvais says the support she received from the Royal Bank has also gone a long way in helping her plan her future and her career in banking. They were impressed enough with Beauvais to offer her a job, long before she ever finished school. Working her summer vacations at the Royal Bank and participating in the organization's on-going management training programs have also played a major role, says the 1998 Nipissing University graduate.

"I completed both the Customer Service Manager and the Assistant Manager of Personal Banking training programs," explained Beauvais, who is currently the Manager of Customer Service for a branch of the Royal Bank in Chatham, Ontario.

Continued on page 25

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Olin Lovely, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
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Hilary A. Baikie, Labrador, Newfoundland
Memorial University, St. John's, NF • Area of Study: Biology

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Desiree A. Kematch, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
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Kehewin Powwow Days promises to be best yet

by John Copley

The Kehewin First Nation will be holding its 1999 Aboriginal Youth Arts Festival and Powwow on May 19-20. Both events will take place at the Kehewin school and powwow grounds.

Bonnyville's Kehewin First Nation is well known for its highly integrated arts groups, educational conferences and cultural gatherings. Their hard work and determination to succeed in educating and enlightening their community members, especially the youth, has seen the Band receive numerous grants, including a couple from the Canada Council. The most recent, a \$50,000 grant from Canada Council's Millennium Arts Fund, received final approval last November.

"As in the past," said Project Coordinator Rosa John, "we have been fortunate to secure enough funding that we will be able to highlight our youth and allow them to show off their work. It will also allow us the opportunity to present our community, and the efforts being made here, to the public. The upcoming youth arts festival and powwow is a joint venture between Kehewin Native Performance and the Kehewin High School. The entire two day event has been designed to celebrate our dance, music, theatre and visual arts."

John says that the Kehewin High School and Cultural Fine Arts students have "worked very hard to bring together some of the best dancers, drummers, musicians and performers. We've also invited a number of mentors, each well-known in his or her particular field of art."

The mid-week celebration will also include numerous



informal sessions that will allow the youth to participate by learning how to attain goals, seek funding, enhance education and secure support for their particular interest or endeavour.

The powwow and arts festival will open with an 8:00 a.m. pipe ceremony on Wednesday, May 19 and will close at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 20 following a giveaway and closing ceremonies. In between, spectators will be treated to dozens of activities including a writing workshop with well-known author Drew Hayden Taylor, a screen acting presentation by the incomparable Gary Farmer, a music workshop with accomplished musician Jani Lauzon and a presentation of White Mountain Art Education, presented by Arthur Renwick.

"Spectators and participants will both be treated to numerous dance demonstrations including those of the Inuit, the Aztec and the Kehewin High School Powwow Dancers," said Rosa John, who added that the festivities would also include a break dance competition and a special presentation by the Moose Mountain Metis Dancers.

Kehewin First Nation projects are known for their ingenuity, thoughtful planning and successful

turnouts. Their last Canada Council for the Arts funding allowed the group to tour the show *Seven Generations*, a play which included three traditional stories that taught about the environment.

The play, which toured eastern Canadian First Nations, dealt with several topics. From the Nehi/Cree came the story of Mistassini, the great rock mountain. From the Anishnaabe/Ojibway came the story of the turtle and the gift of the Milky Way and from the Iroquois, the story of corn, beans and squash. John said the tour was a huge success, as was last fall's Kehewin Cultural Fine Arts Project, a partnership between the Kehewin Native Performance, the Kehewin Community Education Centre and the Kehewin Band Council.

"It was an unbelievable experience," remarked John, who said that everyone still revelled in the positive memories of their trip to the Ghost River Rediscovery Camp. "The opportunity presented our youth with numerous life style alternatives and allowed them the opportunity to participate in numerous undertakings, including activities that could be brought back to their communities. They also discussed how these activities could be used to create entertainment for others in the community. Plans have been made for the group to return in May of this year. The Ghost River camp experience came under the expertise of Mohawk outdoorsman and camp director, Mike Lickers and his team. Our students were involved in numerous group-building games and outdoor education experiences that involved hiking, mountain climbing and lighting a fire using only a single flint. It was great and everyone enjoyed it."

Students who participated in the camp agree.

"It was a beautiful place. It was really exciting to meet new people." (Rosalyn Gadwa)

"I truly discovered who I really was inside. I felt so proud of who I was. I can hardly wait to go again." (Violet John)

"Every day and night was perfect at Ghost River. The rediscovery camp brought each of us close together." (Desiree John)

"It was a wonderful, most spontaneous experience." (Jodie Paul)

For more information about the upcoming Kehewin Youth Arts Festival and Powwow call Rosa John at (780) 826-6200.



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Alberta schools failing to deliver quality education?

by John Copley

Denis Lapierre operates an Edmonton-based education consulting firm known as SchoolWorks! Inc. In a recent conversation with *Alberta Native News*, Mr. Lapierre said that Alberta Education and the Northlands School Division are forcing the province's citizens into thinking that their children are doing better in school than they actually are. Producing a list of 200 schools, entitled: 1998 Top 200 Failing Schools in Alberta, Mr. Lapierre suggests that "our educators like to show the populous who is passing and who is doing well, but they aren't quite so liberal when it comes to discussing the inadequate grades being attained in the hundreds of schools that are continually failing to measure up to public expectations."

Each year provincial achievement tests are given to all students in grades 3, 6 and 9. Lapierre says that "to cause only the best schools are ever mentioned in public," and because "the test results help to determine which school divisions will be rewarded with improvements, we have published a list to show the public that our education system is anything but a bed of roses, especially for the students."

Mr. Lapierre says "there is no denying that the schools in Northlands are in a serious educational crisis and have been for a considerable period of time. There is also no denying that Alberta Society, through the provincial government, is responsible to educate all children to meet the standards established by the Minister of Education (Section 28 Alberta School Act). It is therefore critical for this government to admit to the people of Northlands School Division that the educational difficulties that their children face and have faced over the years are in no way their sole responsibility. Quite the contrary, there has to be an admission that we have failed these children and their families by having chosen to ignore the mounting evidence."

In a recent conversation with local Edmonton media, Education Minister Gary M. Brundage of the SchoolWorks! Inc. comments saying that "it is not constructive in any way, shape or form to do what SchoolWorks has done."

Denis Lapierre, however, disagrees and is calling for an inquiry. He says that until things change "our children are being led down a garden path, a path that for many leads nowhere." He says that it is important that the public hear the stories of the children, of their parents, guardians and their communities.

"An inquiry," assured Lapierre, "will be visible manifestation that we are acknowledging the educational problem that exists in Northlands. It will allow the people to voice their hopes and dreams for their children, and that may surprise everyone. Students

must be informed by those in leadership positions that the fault for their failings in school doesn't lie with them, it lies directly with the schools that failed them."

Northlands Superintendent, Colin Kelly, recently told media that both Alberta Education and the Northlands School Division were working on improvements to the way in which Aboriginal students' learning was assessed. Though unable to give details about how the new assessment procedure would work Kelly did say he hoped it would be in place for next year's Grade 3 students.

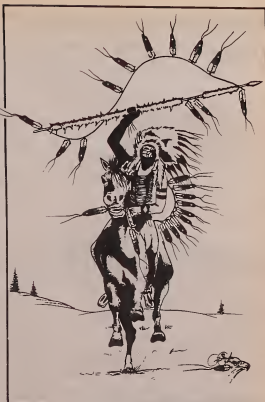
Though some local teachers and school administrators attribute much of the poor grades to an abundance of immigrant children and second language families, Lapierre disagrees. He says that "if the province is serious about measuring the achievements of its students, then it should be intelligent enough to come up with a separate test for non-English speaking Canadians."

Lapierre says that "the cloudy explanations offered by bureaucrats as to why some schools fail the provincial achievement tests are nothing but a smoke screen. Saying that inner city kids move around more than kids from other neighbourhoods, thus bringing about a likelihood of failure may have some merit, but what about the rest of the schools who fail—there are more than 500 of them."

Pointing to the statistics gathered by SchoolWorks! Inc., Lapierre asked "why are these schools failing year after year? If they continually produce failing grades, then why isn't something being done about it? More importantly, why is the public being misled? A public inquiry would help to get some of these questions asked. All we need now is for the parents to get up and demand to know why their children are not getting the education they have been guaranteed."

Included on the list of the top 200 failing schools in Alberta are the Peerless Lake School, Northland #61; Heritage School, Edmonton #7; West Dover School, Calgary #19; Wandering River School, Northern Light #63; Father R. Porm School, Northlands #61; Lacombe Junior High School, Wolf Creek #32; Alex Taylor School, Edmonton #7; Belvedere School, Edmonton #7; Fort McKay School, Northlands #61; Mountain View School, Calgary #19; Alberta School for the Deaf, Edmonton #7; Paddle Prairie School, Northlands #61; Home Education, Wetaskiwin #11; Smith School, Aspen View #19 and Terry Fox Junior High, Calgary #19. The list goes on and on and on.

"These schools are scattered across the province," noted Lapierre. "This shows that poor education is not a thing that can be attributed to inner city kids moving around too much. The fact is the problems are



rampant and if the Minister of Education doubts this fact, then let him print the names of all the failing schools and all the failing subjects in Alberta. Let the people decide if they are happy with the education system after they get a chance to look at both sides of the issue. Like I said, a public inquiry into our education system is the only way we will ever be able to get to the root of the problem. Like every bad dandelion, these roots have to be pulled up before the young grass will be able to grow again."

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In a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*, Bruno Gennaro, Operations Manager at Cameron said, "Our courses are taught by proven professionals who take great pride in their work. We've established a very positive relationship with Native peoples across the land. From Cambridge Bay to Hobbema and from Yellowknife to Frog Lake, we're proud to say that we've run numerous training programs, all successful, in many Aboriginal communities."

One course that took place in Yellowknife saw 78 graduates emerge from the program, many of whom became successfully employed through Cameron Driver's job placement program. Cambridge Bay, Inuvik and several Yukon communities have also taken advantage of Cameron Drivers' ability to turn their students into full time wage earners, complete with a good career and some equally great moments. And Gennaro assures the future also looks very promising.

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"We offer a wide range of services and are happy to help applicants locate funding when the necessity arises," said Gennaro. "Many opportunities await Native applicants who've decided to pursue a truck driving career—we're simply here to provide the training they'll need to take advantage of those opportunities. We're taking applications from new drivers right now, so if you're interested in a truck-driving career, contact the experts at Cameron Driver Education for the information you need to get started."

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Manitou Sewing Centre graduate excels

by John Copley

The Manitou Sewing and Design Institute (MSDI), located in downtown Saskatoon, is now enjoying its third year of operation and because of its success, Program Coordinator Heather Bridgier says the Institute may add a third course to its already busy agenda.

"We are currently considering the implementation of an all-Native design program," explained Bridgier, during a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "Demand for a course that deals exclusively with Native design has been huge in recent months and because of this we may begin our new course as early as this September."

"Personally," says Betty Johnstone, a recent graduate of MSDI's Diploma Program, "I think that adding an all Native design program would be ideal for the Institute."

Mrs. Johnstone has been designing clothes and sewing them together for a number of decades already, but the 50 year old entrepreneur said that until she enrolled at MSDI her abilities were limited.

"I've worked for a number of years both designing and constructing Native clothing, but mostly I was limited to traditional garb and powwow regalia," she explained. "I found MSDI's course extremely helpful. The two year program offered everything I needed to get started in my own business. I was very impressed with the fact that the Institute took an active interest in our success and made certain that everyone had a thorough understanding of the business end of things. The instructors are real professionals and I definitely felt comfortable learning from them all."

Manitou Design instructors are all active in the garment industry, each bringing his and her own areas of expertise to the teaching team. Bridgier says that the expertise offered by her instructors is second to none and that because of their outside involvement "everyone stays up to date in the industry, thereby helping our students to stay ahead in this fast paced industry."

Betty Johnstone's future in the garment industry already looks bright, and she just graduated a month ago. Attributing her successful completion of MSDI's course to the cooperation and backing of her husband, Rueben, Mrs. Johnstone says she hopes to build her client base through special functions and visits to surrounding First Nations communities.

"During the time I was enrolled at MSDI," she explained, "my husband washed the dishes, looked after our nephew and cooked the occasional meal. There was a lot of homework. I had to give up some of my clients as well. But the whole venture has been

worthwhile."

Betty Johnstone is holding her first fashion show in May and has a wedding booked for July. She's also made arrangements to set up her booth at neighbouring powwows and other social events. She says that's where most of her business comes from.

"There's a new resurgence among Native people," explained Johnstone. "Many Native people are going back to their culture. Most of my customers want a design that identifies who they are, yet is subtle enough to wear to any occasion."

Through the MSDI program Johnstone is now able to make patterns, fit customers and custom tailor both casual and dress clothing. Her upgraded education has given her the ability to design and manufacture everything from blue jeans to tuxedos.

"The sky is the limit," assured Betty Johnstone. "The only thing that will determine my future now is how hard I'm willing to work."

MSDI has also recently announced the winner of their 1999 \$1,000 scholarship. The award, offered annually, goes to the contestant who submits the best original design on an 8.5 by 11 inch sheet of paper, accompanied by a paragraph that describes why their submission should be considered for first place. Annual five hundred dollar scholarships are awarded to a winning contestant from each province entered, with the overall winner receiving an additional five hundred dollars.

This year's top winner is Janet Head, a member of northern Manitoba's Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Interested in sewing and design since her preteen years, Janet Head received her initial education in sewing and beadwork from her late grandmother, Lizzie Lathlin, her aunt Flora Ross and her mother, Rever-

end Hagar Head. Involved with numerous fashion shows on the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and others in Flin Flon, Manitoba, Janet Head has already completed a three year part time fashion design course at the Lucia Au School of Fashion. Janet specializes in Native beadwork and incorporates aboriginal images in many of her designs.

"I was real excited and happy, but more surprised than anything," said Janet Head, after being notified of her win. "I will use this scholarship to continue to carry on the tradition of art that has been passed down to me."

For more information about the programs offered at the Manitou Sewing and Design Institute, contact Heather Bridgier by calling (306) 978-9088. Long distance callers can dial toll-free to 1-877-978-9088. You can also write to the MSDI Administration Office at 218B, Avenue B South, Saskatoon, Sask. S7M 1M4.



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Aboriginal students need intervention to achieve parity

by Brian Savage

In the Kamloops-Thompson school district the First Nations Educational Council has monitored achievement test results for the past three years.

Council administrator Renee Spence says the results "are probably not dissimilar to what you'd find across the entire country, that Aboriginal learners are not doing well in comparison with the general school population."

The results come from district and national achievement tests, says Spence. In her own school district the numbers show that 43 percent of Native students in grade four read below grade level, a percentage that



is double that for non-Natives. In language skills those same Native students scored 54 percent below average compared to 27 percent for non-Natives.

These differences could be found through elementary and junior high with spelling as the only area where Native students scored the same as non-Natives.

Spence says that her school district is "very serious" about building a strategy to combat such figures but admits that it will take years to see any major turnaround.

"It's taken years to get this bad, and it's been this bad for 20 years now. If you look at reports done 20 years ago, the stats have not changed that much, so the question is, what is happening to Aboriginal learners in the public school system that is preventing them from achieving parity with the rest of the school population?"

A proactive approach is necessary, says Spence. "The First Nations council is saying this is the data but let's not just wring our hands, let's do something about it." The first step is to understand the data and the issues and then plan intervention programs and services to improve the data, says Spence.

"The long term goal is to have First Nations learners at parity with the general population—that's the goal. It might take 20 years to get to that goal," admits Spence, adding that a yearly report allows progress to be plotted and there have been some signs of improve-

ment though not enough to celebrate. "We have to see consistent improvements over a long period of time before we'd say there was a trend of improvement."

Spence says that the provincial Ministry of Education is now making First Nations education a "priority" with data-gathering and political commitments to improve the situation Native students face in the schools. One promise has been to continue special funding for each district based on their Aboriginal population, says Spence.

One possible course would be to implement an early intervention plan aimed at pre-schoolers and kindergarten students living on reserves.

"That would allow us to have a comprehensive understanding of how our First Nations students are doing when they enter school."

Such a strategy would pinpoint areas of concern right at the start as well as assist the young students in getting the basic foundation skills in literacy and numeracy by the time they enter grade four. Without the basic skills, says Spence, you just compound the problem.

"One of the initiatives that could complement the kinds of things we're doing at the early school level is the headstart program," observes Spence, "which should provide an opportunity for the 0 to six years of development. Some of that could be language and math or school readiness, where you introduce vocabulary and language in a very informal, non-academic way."

On-reserve headstart programs have only recently started but off-reserve headstart programs have received funding for a number of years, according to Spence.

One other factor that Native students face is that of poverty.

"I'd be very surprised if poverty wasn't one of the variables in the achievement levels," says Spence.

"I think there have been studies that show poverty has a negative impact on a child's academic success; it isn't always but it often is."

To get the message and concern out the council has decided to be open and broadcast their findings, says Spence, a direction taken by Chief Nathan Matthews, head of the council.

"We want the public to know this; this is not something we're going to hide from the general public," explains Spence about the chief's tactics on the data gathering. "We want the government to know. We want the politicians to know. We're going to hold the public school system accountable by making the data public but also by working with them on solutions. The public school system is a big institution, we can't just say well you guys caused this, you fix it. There has to be some work with the First Nations communities, they set the agenda."

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Aboriginal languages coordinator worked hard to succeed

The words, "dignified, intelligent, ambitious, and kind" come to mind after meeting Maxine Friesen, the newly appointed Aboriginal Languages Coordinator for Métis Nation of Alberta.

Less than a year ago, Maxine had been unemployed and in search of a career. She wanted to be involved with the Métis Nation because she wanted to "give back" to her community.

Maxine grew up on a farm outside of Grande Prairie, in a family that included nine brothers and sisters and many foster children. Her family was poor. It was the Métis Nation that made it possible for them to bring running water into their house, and Maxine never forgot that.



Maxine Friesen

Maxine has lived in more than a few small Alberta communities, especially in northern Alberta, since leaving the farm in Grande Prairie, and she's familiar with life both on and off the reserve. A single mother of four children, she struggled to find time to complete her education, but finally, two and a half years ago, she finished grade 12 through correspondence. And as recently as last year, she studied English 30, passing it with flying colours after only three months of study.

In May 1998, Maxine volunteered at the Métis Resource Center and one project led to another. She didn't want to leave, but needed a paying job, and she wanted training. She was referred to ABILITY Career & Employment Services in an effort to help define her career direction and also in the hopes of obtaining a Training on the Job contract which would pay her while she worked and trained. Bonnie Angus of ABILITY completed an assessment of Maxine's situation, and was surprised with how far Maxine had already progressed in determining where she wanted to be. It was clear that Maxine had already impressed the people at Métis Nation, and they were eager to be involved in training and development. So together Maxine, Lorraine Steel of Métis Nation, and Bonnie created a training plan, and by August the Training on the Job contract was in place.

Since then, Maxine has taken huge strides in both her professional development and in the development of the Cultural Resource Center. She has completed the first phase of her Museums Training certification, a course in archeology and is currently completing a genealogy course. She writes proposals for funding, coordinates volunteers, and represents the Métis Nation on the board of 2005

Alberta Lives" celebration project, as well as the "Royal Canadian Mounted Police March West Re-enactment" (RCMP 125 years).

She was successful in gaining official museum status for the Cultural Resource Center and is now working on incorporating it as a non-profit society.

As Aboriginal Languages Initiatives Coordinator for the Métis Nation of Alberta, Maxine is researching the Michif language (original language of the Métis), which is included in the federal initiative for the preservation of Aboriginal languages. Maxine will participate in the signing of the new 4-year contribution agreement to fund the program.

Today Maxine is a very busy lady with a vision not only for her own future, but for the preservation of Aboriginal language and the future of the Cultural Resource Center. She said that ABILITY Career & Employment Services made it possible for her to work towards this vision. They helped her to confirm her career direction and they provided professional and personal support in her efforts to reach her goal. Maxine completed her Training on the Job in February 1999 and is now a full-time employee of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Self-sufficiency, continued from page 6

to deliver all the services that most Canadians take for granted. He brought BC Hydro, telephones, and full water and sewer services in the past few years. "Percy got a call from Chretien to congratulate him."

Today the community finds employment in logging and fish farming, said Robinson. "We are not customarily loggers. The Band got a tree harvesting license for a nearby island. This will create about 20 jobs. We used to be fishermen. There was a fish processing plant in Klemtu, going back to the early part of the century."

In fact, said Robinson, the fish plant was the reason for Kitasoo, Tsimshian and Heiltsuk families to gather on the traditional Kitasoo village site. In the early days it might have been a solid working community. The fishing for wild salmon died away. The fishermen sold off licenses and equipment.

For a couple of decades this remote "company" town of Klemtu struggled with difficult conditions that led to despairing lives. All remnants of traditional Coastal nationhood had been wiped out. "You want to know why? Because the religion was too strong. It completely wiped out all the symbols. Burned them whenever they appeared."

When the industry died the missions departed. The only thing left behind was an empty pit of despair with no cultural landmarks. The people fell into drunkenness, licentious lifestyles. The business of different clans living together had been overcome. Now the time came to defeat the dragons created out of residential schools, closed leaderless communities, and abuse of every kind.

Robinson said that it took the visionary Starr to make Sewind Island dry, no liquor allowed. Robinson fully credits the progress to the island's Elder band manager. Starr is an enduring Elder in his eighties who still commands a voice in major decisions. One of the initiatives he pursues today will revive the fish processing plant.

"We are working on a partnership with a fish farming company," said Robinson. "A year from now we'll have our people employed in logging and we'll be operating a fish processing plant with Atlantic salmon produced on our own fish farm." Meanwhile Robinson faces the difficult but worthwhile challenge of keeping active kids out of trouble.

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About Our Cover

Warrior Woman's Spirit Dance by Denise Le Blanc

Our cover artist, Denise Le Blanc was born in 1971, in Woodstock, Ontario. During her travels throughout America, she developed a true love and interest for this land, its wildlife and its First Peoples.

Upon discovering in her heritage Mimese blood that was already in her spirit, Denise focused her talents on preserving the images of her Métis culture. These images often portray North American Native myth and legends.

Denise said, "Creating art for me is a conscious act of communicating higher levels of thought and awareness with the natural and spirit realms. Subtle symbols, vibrant colours and animals reflect their spiritual powers and remind us of our inherent responsibility for our Mother Earth and her children."

In the years to come, Denise will continue studying art, Native culture and issues concerning the environment. Her quest for the spiritual enlightenment of all peoples will continue to be reflected in her works, which include watercolour



paintings, carvings and dream catchers.

Some of her works are on display at the Centre d'arts visuels de l'Alberta in Edmonton and the Chamber of Commerce Tourist Centre on Wye Road in Sherwood Park, Alberta.

The art which appears on the cover of this month's *Alberta Native News* is *Warrior Woman's Spirit Dance* by Denise Le Blanc. Of this art Denise writes, "Often men are thought to be mankind's warriors. In these modern times many women, even children, are mighty warriors. Not fighting battles of war or by using weapons, they are an effective force—armed with their own special powers."

"Perhaps they fight for their tribe's, their family's, wellbeing with a pen, a paintbrush, a dance—or even a prayer."

"This warrior woman's dance summons the powers of her spirit animal protectors; (the wolf, eagle and bear) to remind her people of their powers within, (other than violence) and that these should be used to benefit all tribes—all of mankind."



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The important sense of belonging

by Malcolm McCall

At the end of the controversy about where Ishmael Haimel would live, Charles Fontaine, 49, nephew of Grand Chief (Assembly of First Nations) Phil Fontaine, took a moment to express his gratitude regarding Hubert "Buddy" Morrisseau. Fontaine recognized how hard Morrisseau, 42, fought to keep his daughter's son in Saugeen (Ojibwa) Nation lands.

The Supreme Court of Canada decided Ishmael's fate after a long struggle. The four year old boy spent the past three years with his grandfather, "in an Ojibwa village in rural Manitoba." Then, suddenly, the headlines read "Boy spirited off to Buffalo."

The report said the white middle class adoptive grandmother from Connecticut, U.S.A., left the country with Ishmael. The (adoptive) grandmother's abrupt departure with Ishmael occurred the moment the court found in their favour.

Charles Fontaine followed Morrisseau's struggle along with other Canadians. Fontaine came from the rural Ojibwa village mentioned by the major dailies. He was born in Pine Falls, Manitoba, and raised to age five in the village of Fort Alexander, Manitoba. This was the village where Morrisseau wished to raise Ishmael. At a young age Fontaine left Fort Alexander to live in foster care.

Fontaine knows about the powerful sense of belonging in Fort Alexander. "When you leave you are an outsider if you try to come back. But I got to know Hubert Morrisseau. It was Hubert (we call him 'Buddy') who introduced me to my own brother, who I had never met."

The momentous event occurred eight years ago. Until that day, Fontaine knew not from whence he had come. Fontaine explained, "I was raised by my aunt. My mother drank as an alcoholic. I got to know mother later but it was really hard. In fact I didn't recognize her. She didn't look good because of drugs and alcohol."

Fontaine said, "Because of my mother's problems I went to residential school briefly. My aunt decided I should be in foster care instead. She arranged the



foster care. I was raised on a farm in St. Elizabeth, Manitoba, with a French Catholic family. It was good, another dimension. In some ways those were my best years, being on a farm. They treated me like their one of their own children.

I went back at 15. It was tough, I didn't stay long. It was harsh. They knew my mom but they didn't know me. All the young people were acting tough with the outsider."

It was a painful period and Fontaine wades into the discussion carefully, "I grew up thinking my last name was Cook. When I returned to Fort Alexander at age 15 somebody said I look like one of the Thomas clan." He left the Saugeen again, still not knowing who he was, and he travelled the continent. Twenty years later he returned to Fort Alexander.

This time he met Hubert Morrisseau. The experience Fontaine described was literally spine tingling. He remembers the event as distinctly as any in his own mind. "At that meeting where I was supposed to meet my brother the first thing I saw was a picture of my father. I knew he had passed away in 1986. I never met him. I looked in his eyes and I knew it was him."

Fontaine continued, "Getting back to meeting my brother, after I looked at the picture this guy came in the room with Hubert Morrisseau. He told me, 'When you were here last time, long ago, I wanted to approach you. There was something about you.' He stood looking closely at this brother and he finally realized who he was, and where he had come from. Then Hubert said, 'Marcel, meet your brother Charles.' Marcel spoke and I remember him saying, 'Why I am here is because your dad is my dad, Dan Fontaine.'"

The moment was an important one in his life. He said it made him feel complete. "We have spirit guides, I've always had protection. There have been so many times

that I could've got hurt or could've died in certain situations. But I was protected by my ancestors."

Fontaine concluded, "The Native people always ask the ancestors for guidance. This is the way the Native people believe, always. There is religion and there is spirituality. One wing balances the other, in fact, the two wings must come together for there to be flight. The existence of religion supplies the balance to the spirit."

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Gitanyow win in Supreme Court

by Brian Savage

The political storm engulfing B.C. Premier Glen Clark is threatening passage of the historic Nisga'a treaty. Besides the firestorm around the embattled Premier, the bill will face heavy opposition from the Reform party when it gets to Ottawa.

On top of that the BC Supreme Court has just ruled in favour of the Gitanyow First Nation in their legal struggle to establish their own land claim.

The Gitanyow contend that over 80 percent of their traditional land has been given over to the Nisga'a.

Justice Paul Williamson ruled that good faith bargaining must be done by the provincial and federal governments and will now study another point raised by the Gitanyow of whether or not the federal government broke its obligation to the band to negotiate in good faith.

Herb Russell, assistant to Gitanyow negotiator Glen Williams, called the ruling by the judge important.

"The ruling was significant in that it's going to give us an opportunity to try and deal with some of the overlapping issues from the Nisga'a agreement, and how they concluded it without consulting Gitanyow, and didn't disclose any information until the Nisga'a AIP (agreement in principle) became a public document."

The second part of the decision could strike a heavy legal blow against the credibility of the Nisga'a treaty. "That's a real possibility," says Russell. "If we do proceed with the second part there's a good possibility that the court could rule the Nisga'a agreement null

and void."

A key meeting will be held this month with federal representatives and provincial delegates could also be in attendance.

A major point for the Gitanyow would be the restoration of the bulk of their traditional land which they claim was ceded to the Nisga'a without consultation.

"The feds and BC have taken the position that the whole treaty process in BC is not based on Aboriginal title and rights. That was the other part of the ruling, that the BC and Canada agreements are wrong. The Gitanyow made their statement of intent in 1994, then the BC Treaty Commission was set up and they accepted the Gitanyow statement of claim and statement of intent to negotiate. The BC Treaty Commission also accepted our traditional map as part of our statement of intent and that was really significant I thought."

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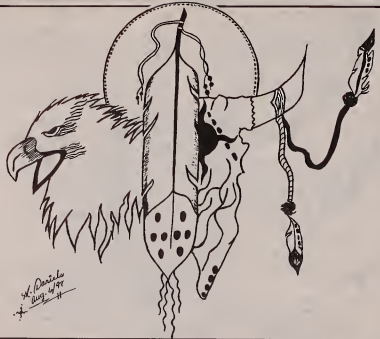
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Part of the problem the Gitanyow have continually faced over the years says Russell is a fundamental difference in terms of negotiations which has hampered talks at the table.

"We always keep telling them we have a different approach; we don't want to settle for cash and land, we don't want to cede and surrender, we feel it's no longer a requirement for the governments to try to extinguish our rights."

"The argument has been that section 35 has protected those rights and that what we're trying to do, capture those rights, identify what they are and capture them in our treaty so they're protected."

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Building Our Communities

Treaty costs will benefit whole province

by Ennis Morris

When the counting is over and all of the treaty land claim agreements have been settled, the Province of British Columbia will come out well ahead of the game says a report just released by BC's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Wilson.

The report, an updated version of the original, initially commissioned by the province in 1996, was researched, analysed and prepared by independent consultants Grant Thornton Management Consultants, a Vancouver-based company that specializes in accounting and management consulting work. The original report was completed by another Vancouver-based accounting firm, KPMG.

"This report," assured Wilson, "confirms my belief that negotiating treaties is necessary for moral and legal reasons and that resolving land claims will benefit B.C.'s economy." The Aboriginal Affairs Minister expounded by saying that "even when all O.C.'s costs of treaty making are taken into consideration, the province as a whole will see a significant net benefit of roughly \$4 billion in coming decades. We will also gain dividends from ending the economic uncertainty caused by land claims that is costing a billion dollars in lost investment and jobs."

Treaty negotiations in British Columbia have been ongoing during the past six years, a result of government recognition of obligations and their desire to finally resolve many of the outstanding issues facing the province's Aboriginal people. These obligations are somewhat substantiated by the Delgamuukw Decision, where the underlying message has been for governments to settle treaties and to deal with Aboriginal peoples in a fair, expedient manner.

Today most of the responsibility for facilitating and overseeing treaty agreements in the province falls under the auspices of the B.C. Treaty Commission. Since its inception, the Commission has received more than 50 claims. The Nisga'a Nation's final treaty agreement, signed on August 4, 1998, was handled outside of the B.C. Treaty Commission because it was initiated many years before the Commission had been set up. Once it receives ratification, the Nisga'a treaty will be the first treaty signed in the province since 1899.

"This report," explained Mr. Wilson after releasing the updated Grant Thornton paper, "is based on the provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement but makes accommodation for the unique characteristics of future settlements in both rural and urban areas of the province. The report also confirms that the Nisga'a treaty is on track with the 1996 KPMG study of the costs and benefits of treaties in B.C."

Mr. Wilson said that in 1996 the provincial government committed to reaching a final agreement with the Nisga'a and to negotiating resolutions to land claims that are fair and affordable for British Columbia. This independent report indicates that we can keep to the costs predicted by the 1996 KPMG study and negotiate treaties that benefit our province economically. These findings are particularly important given the level of misinformation about the cost of the Nisga'a treaty being published by its opponents."

The Grant Thornton report also confirms that the overall costs of settling land claims in British Columbia will range from \$9.2 to \$9.6 billion over the next 40 years. B.C.'s share of the overall costs is estimated at around \$2 billion, or \$50 million a year. An additional \$2.8 to \$3.5 billion of Crown land, at today's market rates, will also become a part of the new deal.

The report also shows that the province will reap a net financial gain, through the Nisga'a deal alone, of more than \$188 million, a figure that fits into the KPMG cost prediction (1996) for the settlement of all land claims in B.C.



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The research and analysis for Grant Thornton's report was carried out last September and October and a draft report was issued at that time. All of the information contained in the report relates to conditions and events which were current at October 1998. Some minor technical revisions were made to the report in March 1999.

The figures in the report, though accurate at this time, are subject to some change, as indicated in this passage: "The estimates provided in this report carry a substantial degree of risk since many of the variables used are complex and rely on a number of factors taking place. For example, the earlier report was based on prevailing economic conditions at that time, which have changed in the three intervening years and will undoubtedly continue to change. Inevitably, the accuracy of the numbers is dependent on the occurrence of future events which, by their nature, cannot be assured. As a result, the actual costs incurred and impacts achieved could well differ from these estimates."

Copies of the report are available by contacting the B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs website at www.aaf.gov.bc.ca/aaf/pubs/pubs.htm or by calling the toll free phone number at 1-800-850-1022.

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Kamloops Indian Band enacts Labour Code

The Kamloops Indian Band, located in B.C.'s Interior, has officially established a Labour Code to guide the conduct of labour relations within its community, and a tribunal to have exclusive jurisdiction within the reserve. The purpose of the code is to ensure the principles, values and unique culture of the Secwepemc and Tk'emlupsemc people are observed in matters related to employment.

The Kamloops Indian Band Labour Code—the first of its kind in Canada—seeks to ensure that the traditions of the community guide matters of labour relations on the reserve. Band Chief Manny Jules notes that the right of self-government was an existing Aboriginal right when the Constitution Act of 1982 came into force. Labour relations is one area of focus in the inherent right of self-government because regulation of labour relations will have a direct impact on the future economic development of First Nations.

The new Labour Code, unanimously approved at a band meeting in February 1998, will govern and guide conduct between the band as employer, and employees, including any union representing its employees. In discussing the Labour Code and its role in affirming self government, Band Chief Manny Jules explains, "The traditional roles of labour and industry have polarized the people of this province. We do not want that to happen in the reserve. We are seeking balance and consensus."

Added Chief Jules, "Our Labour Code is part of our move toward self-governance and has the strong support of our First Nations community."

Responding to criticisms that the new Labour Code is intended to hamper a union, Chief Jules stated, "The Report Of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recognized the need for effective self-government for Aboriginal peoples as a basis for economic development. We want to be clear that we are not opposed to a union representing the interests of the employees on reserve, if that is what the employees want. What we oppose is an institution that is not prepared to



respect the culture, traditions and values of the Kamloops Indian Band."

Central aspects of the new Labour Code include establishment of a judicial arm, the *Quellletkw* (Shuswap word for court), to oversee implementation of the code as well as guidance from a Custom Advisory Panel. The primary role of the independent *Quellletkw* is to enforce the code within its guiding principles, and to have exclusive jurisdiction to decide any question arising under the code. The code does not exclude the jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Canada—judicial review would lie to the Federal Court from any decision of the *Quellletkw*. The Custom Advisory Panel's role is to assist the judicial arm to protect and preserve the unique culture of the community by providing a source of wisdom on the teachings and ways of the Secwepemc and Tk'emlupsemc as they relate to the conduct of labour relations.

Other notable components of the Labour Code include prohibiting strikes by employees as well as lockouts by the employer. "The code prohibits strikes that would have the effect of dividing our community," said Jules. "We believe strikes are an antagonistic and aggressive way of resolving differences. The work of the band employees is so inextricably tied to the community that these services are essential to the very fabric of our life on the reserve. We are being realistic by balancing the interests of the community with the rights of the employees."

In terms of the new code of interaction with other federal policies, the chief and council believe that the field of labour relations is part of the mainstay of self-government jurisdiction on the reserve.

The Kamloops Band believes this code, the first of its kind in Canada, will serve as a model for other First Nations in British Columbia and across Canada. The band believes the considerations of the other First Nations will be similar to its own: ensuring that culture, traditions and inherent right to self government are central to the conduct of labour relations within its community.

The Kamloops Indian Band represents approximately 900 members of the Secwepemc nation in British Columbia's southern Interior.

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Social realities dire for off-reserve Natives

by Viola Thomas, President, United Native Nations

Premiers and Territorial leaders as well as provincial Aboriginal leaders from across Canada met with national Aboriginal leaders on March 22, 1999, in Regina, Saskatchewan. This was a follow up to the 1996 Annual Premiers Conference.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the social framework agreement recently concluded by the provinces and the federal government.

It was agreed by all participants at the meeting that the national Aboriginal organizations be engaged in the implementation of the social union agreement wherever such implementation has implications for all Aboriginal peoples.

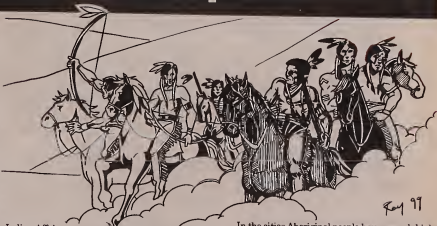
Some of the provincial premiers expressed their concern about the continuous "off loading" by the federal government for "status" and "treaty" persons not living on reserves. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples statistics show that 552,000 "status" and "treaty" individuals, or 73 percent of all 711,000, live off reserves in Canada.

The federal government transfers millions of dollars to British Columbia for all "status" and "treaty" children going to public schools, even though approximately 58 percent of all Aboriginal youth do not complete high school. The result of Aboriginal students not completing high school creates all kinds of difficulties for Aboriginal youth and their families.

The social realities faced by Aboriginal peoples in urban and rural communities raises different complexities that Aboriginal peoples may not face on reserves.

The majority of child apprehensions, prostitution, criminal offences and multiple drug and alcohol addictions, as well as the morbidity and mortality is much higher statistically for off-reserve Aboriginal peoples compared to the rest of Canada's population. Many of our Aboriginal people end up living a life of poverty, despair and hopelessness. They feel isolated from their relatives on-reserves and they become victimized by the racism and exclusion of "culturally appropriate services."

British Columbians also tend to believe that all Aboriginal peoples access the \$4.2 billion allocated by the federal government through the Department of



Indian Affairs.

However, this is not the case and this money is in fact limited to 40,418 of 169,000 status Aboriginals currently living on reserves in British Columbia.

Another popular myth is that Aboriginals get "everything" for nothing and benefit from a lot of tax exemptions. The fact is 102,000 Aboriginal adults contributed a total of \$231,759,895 towards municipal, provincial and federal taxes in 1991.

The continued exclusion and marginalization of the urban and rural status, non-status, Bill C-31 Aboriginal persons can be stopped by revisiting the fiscal arrangements with the provincial and federal governments.

By ensuring that the social framework agreement provides "equitable" access to financial support, urban Aboriginal agencies will restore the dignity, and pride of our people. Adequate and appropriate funding will also help to ensure that our people will not continue to die on the streets and in the gutters of British Columbia.

The provincial and federal governments have a great opportunity to ensure urban and rural Aboriginal peoples can be treated fairly and equitably in the implementation of this sorely needed social union agreement.

So much money is lost in the shuffle of the Canada Health Social Service (CHST) transfers to provinces, which is calculated on population, regardless of race, that Aboriginal people get excluded from the equation, particularly and especially in the urban area.

In the cities Aboriginal people have a much higher morbidity and mortality rate than on-reserve. According to the previous Chief Medical Officer of British Columbia, Dr. John Miller, there is a shocking 17 percent higher suicide rate off-reserve than on-reserve.

What does this tell us about the urban area and First Nations? It tells us there is a myth that you are taken better care of in Vancouver and other large cities, where you literally and figuratively have a greater opportunity to become ill or die.

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Aboriginal entrepreneurs gaining ground

by John Copley

Trucking, forestry, construction, tourism, resource management; you name it and Aboriginal people are involved in it. In fact, since the early 1990s, one of Canada's fastest growing business communities has been those emerging from Canada's indigenous communities. The slate of continuous Aboriginal entrepreneurial gatherings across Alberta and other parts of western Canada and beyond during the past several years adds even more credibility to Statistics Canada Aboriginal peoples surveys.

In 1991, Statistics Canada declared that 18,000 Aboriginal entrepreneurs were running their own businesses. Between 1991 and 1994, 34,000 more businesses were added to the Aboriginal ownership list. Those figures are continuing to grow and it is expected that by the turn of the century almost 85,000 Native owned businesses will be in operation.

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) is an organization involved in providing business services and support to Canada's Indian, Inuit and Metis organizations, associations and individuals. An independent study has shown that many of the hundreds of Aboriginal businesses supported by this growing organization are on a par with, or slightly ahead of other Canadian small businesses. Many say the reason for ABC's success is their total commitment to the Aboriginal business person.

In recent years Aboriginal Business Canada has been focussing on strategic business investments. The organization has increased its emphasis on supporting proposals involving expansion of both domestic and import markets, tourism, technology adoption and enhancement and youth entrepreneurship initiatives.

"Financial assistance," say ABC spokespersons, "in the form of repayable and non-repayable contributions are available. These contributions can be used toward the costs of developing business plans, undertaking feasibility studies, establishing new businesses or joint ventures and increasing technology in business via the acquisition of equipment or a way to improve competitiveness. Contributions can also be used for marketing activities designed to expand sales and for business support, such as management and technical training and for hiring professionals after starting a business."

Chief Roy Whitney (Tsuu Tina First Nation) heads up the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board. He says that "significant progress has been made towards rebuilding the Aboriginal economy by countless men, women, and communities. It will be our challenge to work with Aboriginal Business Canada and other departments and agencies to ensure that all available resources and talent are brought to bear on continuing this momentum."

Chief Whitney also applauded a recent announcement by Industry Canada that promises a \$21 million input designed to enhance Aboriginal business development. Funds from the Aboriginal Business Development Initiative, will among other things, help to create an Aboriginal business service network and improve Aboriginal access to capital. The initiative, which is expected to create nearly one thousand new businesses and more than 2,000 new jobs, is a joint effort between Industry Canada and other organizations and the various Aboriginal financial and business organizations. Whitney said the strong partnership will create better business and employment opportunities and will help enhance Aboriginal self-sufficiency in Canada.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs wishing to get started in their own business are encouraged to contact ABC; they support those seeking to start or expand their own business. Opportunities are available for all of Canada's status and non-status Indians as well as



citizens of Metis and Inuit ancestry.

"As we proceed towards the new century," said Whitney, during a recent message, "the members (National Aboriginal Economic Development Board) and I share a conviction that if we want to position Aboriginal businesses to remain strong and viable for the generations which follow, we must concentrate on a few key areas, and develop these well. This is why you will be seeing a change in the role that Aboriginal Business Canada has been playing in the past. The Board feels that increasing the focus on specific priorities is a necessary strategy in our current fiscal and business environment, and we look forward to helping direct its progress. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss a possible venture, I encourage you to get in touch with the program office nearest you."

Aboriginal Business Canada has a team of qualified professionals that are able to address virtually any questions or concerns about starting up a new business. A single phone call can help entrepreneurs discover what it takes to get started in business, what type of business plan is required, what businesses are in demand, which ones need work and which ones don't. The advice is free and if you qualify, sometimes the financial support you receive is given without expectation of return. The program also assists young people aged 19-29 who wish to pursue their business interests. The program highlights Aboriginal people by showcasing their abilities, services and products and by initiating pilot projects that provide youth with current information about getting into business.

Criteria is often dependent on the type of business you may be interested in pursuing but nearly all organizations and financial backers will need to see a business profile, individual track records, if any, and a variety of financial and other experience-related data that might help them determine the worthiness of your individual pursuit. Aspiring entrepreneurs should be prepared, should know their product or business inside out and be willing to go the extra mile to ensure its success. ABC is Canada's most recognized organization devoted to encouraging and aiding the nation's Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

More information can be obtained by contacting ABC at (416) 973-8800 or (705) 522-5100 or by visiting them on their website at www.abc.gc.ca.

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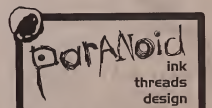
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New Aboriginal business development initiative launched

John Manley, Minister of Industry, has recently announced a \$21 million package of measures designed to improve business development opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The *Aboriginal Business Development Initiative* will improve access to capital, create an Aboriginal Business Services Network and enhance the delivery of existing business support programs to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and organizations.

"Our focus on Aboriginal business growth is paying off in job creation and overall economic development," said Minister Manley. "The *Aboriginal Business Development Initiative* builds on this, and on years of previous work aimed at establishing a solid base of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and financial organizations across Canada."

The *Aboriginal Business Development Initiative* is expected to result directly in the creation of some 900 new businesses and over 2,000 new jobs over its five years. Potentially, thousands of small and medium-sized firms will be supported through access to new information and support sources, referrals and business networks.

"I am pleased that this approach will address the business develop-



ment needs of all Aboriginal peoples, on and off-reserve, including Métis, First Nations and Inuit people," noted Minister Ralph Goodale, federal Inter-locator for Métis and Non-Status Indians. "The involvement of the regional economic development agencies will also help ensure that the programs and services of the federal government are made more accessible in every part of the country, including urban centres."

Speaking on behalf of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB) from Calgary, Chairperson Chief Roy Whitney welcomed the announcement and commended all the partners for their effort to support long-term Aboriginal self-sufficiency through the creation of business and employment opportunities.

Education is a vital component to succeed in today's challenging world. Congratulations to all the 1999 graduates, and best wishes from

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Royal Bank, continued from page 9

"The Royal Bank scholarship," she added, "was extremely helpful. I qualified for the maximum of \$4,000 per year for the four year program and it made quite a difference, not having to worry so much about the financial end of things."

Diligence and determination has paid dividends for Rhonda Beauvais. She says every person wishing to succeed has the same potential. How can success be achieved?

"Apply yourself," said Beauvais. "Never say, I can't. Don't underestimate your ability or capacity to learn and grow. No matter how difficult it looks, try it anyway."

And how do you get the support of others? "Worry about yourself and what is important for you," she answered. "Be productive. When you know where you are headed, when you have some direction,

go there. Support will come from all around you. Parents, teachers, friends and relatives; everyone will be pulling for you, if you are pulling for yourself."

The 1999 recipients of the Royal Bank's Native Student Awards include David Alexander of Merritt, B.C., Olin Lovely of Yellowknife, N.W.T., Hilary Baikie from Northwest River, Nfld, Lizanne LeFebvre of Timmins, Ontario and Desiree Kematch of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

To obtain more information about the Royal Bank's Native Student Awards Program contact the programs' coordinator, Sharon Hussain by calling (416) 955-5824 or write to Royal Bank Native Student Awards, Diversity and Employment Equity, 11th Floor, North Tower, Royal Bank Plaza, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2J5. You can also visit the website at: www.royalbank.com/hr/world/nsap/html or email for more info to: sharonhussain@royalbank.com.



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Environmental business a natural for Natives

by Ennis Morris

Environmentally-friendly is a term like politically-correct—especially when it comes to winning popularity contests. That's why Canada's environment industry, which yesterday was emerging, is now surging. In fact, polls from the professionals say that the environment industry has the potential to be one of the biggest economic opportunities to ever present itself in Canada. Some experts predict that environment-related businesses will represent the largest sector of business during the 21st century. The only hurdle will be for those entrepreneurs wishing to capitalize on this growing industry to be prepared to deliver products that offer balance and ecological soundness. It is anticipated that the industry will also have to address both the physical and spiritual needs of its customers if it is to remain viable. That's why there are going to be an abundance of economic opportunities for Aboriginal businesses that operate on good values, survive on sound principles and commit themselves to environmental friendliness.

In fact, the Aboriginal environmental sector is based on indigenous knowledge and values, say supporters and spokespersons for the Canadian-based firm, Aboriginal Environmental Enterprises (AEE).

"Indigenous knowledge is about ecology, medicine, animals, spirituality and more," say AEE documents that encourage the environmental business experience and involvement of Natives in the coming millennium.

"Aboriginal people have unique cultures, environments and knowledge. For example, the Inuit of the Arctic have used their unique knowledge of the Arctic ecosystem, animals and fish, to survive."

AEE compares the life of the Inuit to that of Ontario's Iroquois. They say that though the "Inuit focus is vastly different from the Iroquois who farm corn, beans and squash, each has developed indigenous knowledge to live sustainably with Mother Earth."

Aboriginal Environmental Enterprises, which provides services that range from Indigenous knowledge applications, engineering, education, environmental audits, resource management, software, international development and more, says opportunities are waiting for Aboriginal companies wanting to participate in any of the number of environmental and social issues business realms. They



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identify some of the business opportunities to include those that reduce harmful greenhouse gases, clean up polluted water systems and educate stake holders in the finer arts of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

AEE says the environmental business sector grew from Aboriginal economic issues like employment, resource concerns, land claims and the recognition that traditional values are meaningful and not to be trifled with.

"Aboriginal environmental enterprise," they conclude, "has the potential to shape the future of Aboriginal entrepreneurship, business development and economic growth."

Indigenous knowledge can be defined and determined in numerous ways, but is best defined by one of the world's leading researchers and proponents of Indigenous knowledge, D.M. Warren, who calls it "local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society (ecology or territory); Indigenous knowledge contrasts with the international system generated by universities, research institutions."

AEE predicts that indigenous knowledge will soon contribute "substantially to perceptions of traditional societies and economies." They say that both the public and scientific (communities) "are developing a new respect based on the remarkable success of traditional medicines, technology and concepts."



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Pentiction Band seeks outside support

by John Copley

Pentiction First Nation Chief Stewart Phillip says their recent rejection of the proposed Pentiction Airport Transfer process is the result of an outcry from "angry band members who have made it clear that they have no intention of giving up traditional lands without a fight."

Western Native News has learned that the Pentiction First Nation has contracted the services of high-profile Aboriginal rights legal team, Mandell-Pinder, to "pursue any and all legal options to challenge not only the validity of the federal government's National Airport Policy," but also to "investigate the original expropriation of the airport lands."

The Pentiction First Nation leader says that his people, currently embroiled in a 122 year old land claim dispute with government, will not be satisfied to sit quietly while others attempt to determine their fate.

"We have been instructed by our members," assured Chief Phillip, "that while we wait for legal opinions we will begin disruptive actions designed to interrupt and frustrate all attempts to transfer the airport lands to the City of Pentiction."

Chief Phillip said that both the short-term and long-term objectives being considered by the Pentiction First Nation include enlisting the support of other Okanagan First Nations as well as others around the province and across Canada. He says that until all of the land claim issues involving the band are resolved, "no individual, company, city or government agency should be able to step in and make decisions that take away from our well-being."

A stroke of the pen on August 16, 1993 saw the Pentiction First Nation community lose more than 1,100 acres of land, leaving them with just 320 of the original 1,427 acres they had been granted when the Pentiction Band's reserve was first established by the Joint Reserve Commission in 1877. In 1982 the band received a parcel of land and a cash settlement totalling \$13 million.

The airport land issue has been a thorn in the side of Pentiction Band leaders since last year when the City of Pentiction sought to acquire the land through the guidelines set down by the National Airport Transfer Policy.

"I'm very pleased with the response that came during the (March 29) General Band Meeting," remarked band member Greg Gabriel, whose family has been involved in the community's land claim issues for decades. "The membership made it very clear and evident that (we) will not sit idly by and have Transport Canada steal any lands that we have an interest in—not without our in-



volvement and approval. I am pleased that the chief and council have agreed to enlist the support of outside groups and other First Nations communities in our quest to have our views heard. It is unfortunate that we are always squeezed into these tight positions before our concerns are taken seriously. We must once again make it clear that this has been a long outstanding issue. My family has been struggling with these issues for generations and we intend to continue—

even if it takes another generation."

Dr. John Hall, a senior policy advisor for the federal government's Specific Claims Branch said it could take years for the Pentiction Band's current claim to be settled. Sighting a backlog of work, Dr. Hall told media that it could be "two or three years before we can get advice out of the Department of Justice. I don't think we'll be ready to give our preliminary opinion for three years or longer."

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Hunting and Fishing

Herring fishery needs four years to recover

As the B.C. roe herring fishery is poised to fish on the last remaining herring spawning aggregation in the Georgia Strait at Hornby Island, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, B.C.'s largest membership-based citizen-funded environment group, is calling for a four year closure on all herring fishing in B.C.

In a WCWC tabloid released recently, titled *B.C.'s herring fishery must be given a chance to recover from 80 years of industrial overfishing* all 5 of the herring fisheries of B.C. are described. The paper also details the corrupt "industrial science" management practices of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and advocates the application of real science. Similar use of the "industrial science" has been applied with disastrous consequences on the east coast. The paper alleges that "serial overfishing" has led to the gradual "domino" elimination of regional herring stocks by allowing massive seine and gillnet fisheries in a single bay or inlet.

The paper includes a vision for a prosperous future "community fishery" for herring once stocks have been allowed to rebuild.

WCWC launched its observation/protest boat earlier in the month to coincide with the roe herring

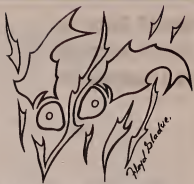
fishery. The Fish for Life executive director, David Ellis, fisheries researcher and expert was on hand to answer questions.

According to the protesters, the roe fishery is a massive corporate fishery that occurs on the spawning grounds, where only the roe is sold to the Japanese, and the herring filets are reduced into animal feed, and only 10 percent of the fish are used for human consumption in Japan. George Weston Ltd. (B.C. Packers) and Jimmy Pattison (The Canadian Fishing Company) reap large profits from this fishery.

The winter food and bait fishery is highly controversial because scientists admit that they do not know if the fish taken represent genetically distinct spawning stocks or are a non-migrating component of the major migratory herring stocks.

• The "live" sports bait fishery targets mostly small, immature herring for use as live bait for salmon sportfishing, but DFO reports note that the fishery targets the declining "resident" herring and other DFO studies also now show that the highly endangered coho and chinook "catch-and-released" from herring "bait rigs" have a very low rate of survival.

• The small scale roe-on-kelp fishery does not kill herring, but is designed to induce the adult fish to leave their eggs or spawn on kelp, which is harvested after the fish leave. The Aboriginal herring fishery, which has now declined to remnant levels due to the industrial overfishing, harvested wild seaweeds with herring spawn attached, or sought to obtain "herring-spawn-on-branches" when hemlock or cedar bushes



are placed on the herring spawning grounds.

The Wilderness Committee advocates the adoption of a B.C. "forage fish" policy as is now in place in Washington State, which insures that the herring biomass is first and foremost recognized as an important source of food for other fish, birds and mammals. "The herring fishery must now be closed for 4 years, before the stocks are so depleted that they can not recover. The last remaining herring in the Strait must be allowed to multiply, so that the depleted populations of sea mammals, birds, and fish that are so depend upon herring can once again increase" noted Paul George, founding director of the Wilderness Committee.

Hundreds of fish, bird, and mammal species need herring, and coho and chinook salmon and lingcod, in particular, have been decimated by the effects of these fisheries. The paper also notes that researchers are now finding conclusive evidence that many species of birds, such as the endangered Harlequin duck, need the large volumes of highly nutritious roe to ensure reproductive success as they subsequently move into the cold interior to nest.

"An equal winner in a more conservative future herring fishery on rebuilt stocks would be the sportfishing and eco-tourism industries," concluded George.

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Resource Development

Cheviot Mine on hold, federal judge quashes gov't approvals

by John Copley

The Cheviot Mine project near Jasper has been scuttled, at least for now. So ruled Federal Court Justice Douglas Campbell in a Thursday, April 8th decision that has stifled any approvals the mine owners may have already received from Ottawa and Edmonton. The latest development in the 3-year-old battle to begin operating an open pit mine operation near one of Canada's most precious National Parks, brings an end to any chance of commencement before a final and comprehensive feasibility study has been completed. Judge Campbell has ruled that the panel who prepared the feasibility/environmental assessment report on the mine, failed to collect enough data about the possible (negative) effects that could arise once the mining operation got underway.

For the past two years the Cheviot Mine operation, a joint venture between Edmonton-based Luscar Ltd. and Cardinal River Coals Ltd., a company co-owned by Consol of Canada Inc., a subsidiary of the huge Pittsburgh-based, Consol Coal Group, has been in limbo as environmentalists, governments, coal miners and Jasper citizens voice their views in what has turned out to be one of the most controversial economic issues in Canada today.

During the past couple of years news coverage has seen Jasper businesses demanding a start to the project, former Luscar Coal employees scoffing at promises of environmental safety, Cheviot mine officials assuring the public that "we believe the land will be left in a better position in 25 to 30 years" and environmentalists expressing frustration about the environmental studies completed on the project. In the past couple of months that same news coverage has pinpointed weakness in the overall coal operation planning, offered figures that indicate a declining market for Canada's coal, compared what's happening to the ecology in other nations who are involved in open-pit mine operations and have published numerous opinions from land issue experts, including Native leaders and others.

The latest federal court ruling has created some breathing room for people opposed to the Cheviot mine project. It could take months before the investigation and assessment procedures run their course—then the whole matter will again be argued in numerous boardrooms and courtrooms before anything moves ahead. For the pro-mining crowd, including the 450 miners who were counting on the operation to be in full swing by the end of this year, it's a frustration they'll have to deal with. The miners are already working nearby, but the coal reserves are expected to be depleted by the middle of next year.

In his ruling Justice Campbell pointed out numerous areas within the proposed plan that he considered unsatisfactory, especially as it pertained to research, analysis and the overall impact that the coal mining operation could leave on the environment. He also pointed out that "while it is true that, as the Joint Review Panel asserts, Cardinal River Coals has the right to carry out the extraction of the coal resources within the applied for mine permit boundary, I find that it does not have the right to do it by open pit mine. Thus, I find that a comparative analysis between open pit mining and underground mining at the project site is required."

Justice Campbell ruled that "while the alternative means of underground mining is generally considered in the Joint Review Panel Report, the effects of this alternative means, as compared to the effects of open pit mining, are not considered in any meaningful way."

He also ruled that as "a result of the Joint Review Panel's breaches of duty and error in due process, the environmental assessment in the present case was not conducted in compliance with the requirements of (the) Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and therefore the Minister's authorization was issued without jurisdiction. Accordingly, it is quashed."

The \$250-million Cheviot project, originally planned for a 1999 startup date, was expected to create about 400 additional jobs by next summer. It was also anticipated that the venture would generate about \$125 million in royalties over the next 20 years.



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Natives—men and women, a target for AIDS awareness

by Brian Savage

A recent report looking into the major health crisis that HIV and AIDS pose for Natives in B.C. notes that Aboriginal women are way more susceptible than non-Native women in contracting HIV/AIDS but Lou Demerais, Executive Director of the Vancouver Native Health Society emphasizes that for Aboriginal people both sexes are still very much at risk of contracting the deadly disease.

The high rate of infection among the Aboriginal population is not surprising for those who know the social conditions that many Natives live in.

"I suppose it's mainly attributable to unsafe practices," says Demerais. "Whether it's the unsafe use of syringes or unsafe sex without any kinds of protection; the whole thing seems to be fuelled by substance abuse which seems to be part of poverty in general."

Drug abuse in B.C. is of special concern because of the ease of importation, observes Demerais. The problem confronting Native health care groups are many and the recent report *The Red Road, Pathways to Wholeness* provides an overview of the problems confronting Natives.

"There are several different groups trying the best they can with limited resources, to do a variety of different kinds of services," says Demerais. "But I think overall what's needed more than anything is education in our school system, and more attention to the whole problem by First Nations leadership, federally, provincially and locally."

A refusal by the part of Native leaders to recognize the immense threat HIV/AIDS poses to Aboriginal people frustrates Demerais. "I think to some extent many of these leaders are busy working on what they see as key issues of the day, such things as treaty negotiations and the land question and economic development. There seems to be an unstated notion out there that if we can enhance things in the areas of economic development and self government these matters related to health will take care of themselves."

Another problem confronting Native health care providers is the very political way funding is doled out, according to Demerais, with the more prominent AIDS groups getting more money because of their greater lobbying powers.

The change to regional health boards in the province also offers new challenges for Natives, says Demerais. "Victoria has been handing over responsibility to regional health boards which brings things a little closer to the ground level where we all operate on but whether or not they'll hand over the necessary financial resources remains a question. Even with regionalization that means a whole lot of reorganization which takes time and there's no guarantee that the groups involved will remain involved because often decisions get made by regional board bureaucrats prior to any kind of consultation."

The Minister of Health decides who sits on the regional boards now, says Demerais, and such a process is not above political favouritism. "It's the squeaky wheel kind of thing that impacts decision making," observes Demerais, who says



Native groups, typically, lag behind other groups when it comes to political lobbying for such things as funding for HIV/AIDS.

Natives are especially at risk because of their lifestyles, says Demerais, describing the strict regimen someone must follow, taking protease inhibitors to fight what he calls a "very insidious, mutating" virus. "If they miss once it usually throws everything out of whack, the virus comes back with a vengeance." People begin to feel better as their viral load count goes down and their T4 cell count comes up. "They think they have the thing licked and they make one little mistake that knocks them down again. For a lot of people who simply don't have the kind of daily good habits it's easy to forget; it's a pain in the ass to have to live by a clock to take pills."

The problem of substance abuse and people caught in its grim cycle makes fighting HIV/AIDS that much harder.

"What chance do we have of keeping them on the straight and narrow and taking their medicine if they're taking (other) drugs and alcohol?" asks Demerais, noting that substance abuse interferes with the medicine, compromising the body's medical systems and opening the way for "opportunistic" diseases like TB to come into the picture. Another concern is the mobility of young people today who can travel wherever they want and, says Demerais, calling it a "recipe for disaster," when, not knowing they are infected, the person can spread the disease to many partners, especially in the first year of infection when the virus is especially virulent but with no symptoms showing.

Natives will have to shed their natural conservatism in order to fight this disease, says Demerais; one recommendation in the report that needle exchanges be established on reserve will be hard to implement, says Demerais, comparing it to the reluctance of Native leadership in dealing with the disease.

Funding will be a problem that must be dealt with in the near future, says Demerais, who admits that he has been told that his organization may actually suffer funding cuts and blames it on the government's determination to allocate money for Natives living on reserves. Demerais calls such qualifications "false labels" that reduce many Natives to second-class citizens. "We won't discriminate on the basis of whether a person has a (status) number or not. In B.C. more than 60 percent (of Natives) live off reserve now, regardless of how many are registered; only 40 percent live on reserve. What that leads to is a certain form of elitism."

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National Chief concerned at results of SIDS study

National Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations is concerned by the University of Calgary study released this month, which found that Aboriginal infants in Alberta are ten times more likely to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) than other infants in the province. Last year, the BC Ministry of Health released a study that found similar findings. The study found that Aboriginal infants in B.C. are five times more likely to die of SIDS than other infants in the province.

"The results are not totally surprising to us. We have known that the rate of SIDS is greater in our communities than in non-Aboriginal communities. Yet it is still shocking to see that study after study is coming to same conclusion. The real task that lies ahead is to decide what First Nations and the federal government are going to do about this growing trend," National Chief Fontaine said.

While research concludes that there is no definite way to prevent SIDS, there are factors which can reduce the risk, including breast-feeding the infant, putting the infant to sleep on its back, and avoiding overheating the infant, eliminating maternal smoking, and smoking around the infant. Both provincial reports cite poor economic and health conditions and lack of awareness as reasons for the large gap in statistics. Also, the high smoking rates amongst First Nations have been cited as a contribution to the problem.

"The information is simply not getting out to the First Nations communities. While the statistics for the general population have been decreasing the past 20 years, they are increasing for First Nations. The federal government has increased funding for prenatal care. This study proves beyond a doubt that a high percentage of those resources must be directed to train health care workers and develop a SIDS awareness campaign geared towards expectant First Nations mothers," added the National Chief.

The AFN Health Secretariat hopes to improve awareness and achieve similar results as in the United



Snowy owl,

© CHRISTOPHER HARVEY/CHAMBAUD, 99

States, where the SIDS rate has declined by approximately 30 percent since they began a public awareness campaign called "Back to Sleep".

What Is SIDS?

When a healthy infant less than one-year-old dies suddenly, and no reason for the death can be found, it can be said that the infant died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS. SIDS is most likely to occur in infants around 2 to 4 months old. There are about 400 SIDS deaths in Canada each year, making SIDS the leading cause of death for infants between one month and one year old.

How do First Nations' rates compare to the general population?

- Contrary to the general population, where the SIDS rates are decreasing, the proportion of Aboriginal SIDS cases have been increasing over years.
- A study out of the University of Calgary has found that Aboriginal infants in Alberta are 10 times more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome than other infants in the province.
- A study from the BC Ministry of Health found that the mortality rate due to SIDS in Aboriginal infants in British Columbia is almost 5 times the risk of other B.C. infants.

What factors contribute to an increased risk of SIDS?

Determinants of health frequently seen amongst First Nations, such as poverty, education levels and poor health and social conditions are all believed to contribute to a high rate of SIDS.

We also know that not only are First Nations infants at greater risk, infant boys are at higher risk than infant girls are. Also, infants who are exposed to second-hand smoke in utero and in their environment after birth are at greater risk of dying from SIDS.

Is there a definite cause of SIDS? How can SIDS be prevented?

While there is no definite way to prevent SIDS, there are ways to drastically reduce the risk.

- By putting the infant to sleep on his/her back; NOT on its stomach;
- By not smoking while pregnant, or allowing any smoking in the house; cigarette smoke puts infants at higher risk of respiratory infection and also increases the risk of dying from SIDS;
- By not allowing other people, such as friends and baby-sitters to smoke around the infant;
- By not over-heating the infant;
- By not allowing the infant sleep on a soft mattress, a soft pillow, or on a duvet;
- By not including a blanket, pillow, or even a cuddly toy such as a teddy bear, in the crib with the infant;
- By breast-feeding the infant. Infants who are breast-fed are at less risk of dying from SIDS.

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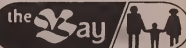
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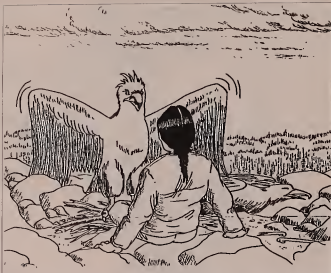
The Hunter and the Pithesiwuk

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt; told by Ida Ratt



Long ago people believed that the thunderbirds or Pithesiwuk had their roost in the craggy peaks of the mountains in the west or on very high cliffs along our northern lakes and rivers.

The people who lived in one village near the mountains were warned never to go too close to them because some of the Pithesiwuk were evil and would attack and devour them.



One day in the winter a hunter went searching for animals and he wandered close to the foot of the mountains. This Indian had been warned by the old men in the nearby village to stay away from the mountains because a female thunderbird in the peaks had a taste for human flesh. But he had little fear of anything. He was one of the greatest hunters in the world. Soon the female thunderbird saw the Indian stalking in the forest below and swooped down rapidly attacking him with her talons.

She pulled the hunter through the air upward to her nest. He drove his spear into her chest, striking again and again as the bird flew on in the sky.

When they reached the nest, Pithesiwuk fell over on the ledge dead from the blows of the spear.

Soon the mate of the female thunderbird arrived on the scene. The great angry bird screamed at the hunter when it saw that its mate was dead, "You will look after my children for what you have done, or I will hurl you into the rocks below!"

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The Indian promised he would care for the young because he had killed their mother. The male thunderbird would gather food from below while the hunter would keep the young birds from falling out of the nest.

When the white headed thunderbird flew off to search for food, the Indian picked up his spear and killed the little thunderbirds in their nest.



Now he must escape or face certain death. There were no paths or footholds going down the mountain.

The hunter thought of a daring plan. Using his spear, he cut the stomach out of the dead mother bird. Pulling the skin over his body, he stretched out the wings and glided down through the sky landing lightly on the ground of the forest.



He took the skin off quickly and hurried quickly through the trees towards the camp he had been going to visit.

That night, the sky became black and thunder resounded from the mountain's sides. Lightning bolts smashed into the forest as the male thunderbird searched angrily for the hunter.

Never again did the hunter wander close to the mountains of the evil thunderbirds.

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